

*Heeph. Saunders 1736*

*The Blessedness of Pious Persons after  
Death, Consider'd :*

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I N A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd upon a

Funeral Occasion

A T

Woodford in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

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By THO. SAUNDERS, *E.M.*

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Publish'd at the Request of some that  
heard it.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible and  
Crown in the Poultry, near Cheapside,  
M DCC XXII.

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Death, Consider'd:

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SERMON

Preach'd upon a

Funeral Occasion

46  
A. F. 14

Westley in Northamptonshire.

By Tho. F. M.



Printed at the University of Oxford, at the Press of J. B. R.

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REV. xiv. 13.

*And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.*



HERE is nothing more certain than Death itself, nothing more uncertain than the Time when, nothing less thought of and prepar'd for, though nothing of that important Concern: I believe the Generality of Men would have other Notions about Death than they have, did they more frequently converse with, and spend Time in Meditations upon it: Nor can any excuse themselves, who live in the Neglect of an Inquiry of this Nature, seeing it is what GOD requires as a



Duty of us in that Expostulation with *Israel*, *Deut.* xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End.* And punishes the Neglect of it as a Sin, *Lam.* i. 9. *She remembreth not her last End; therefore she came down wonderfully, and had no Comforter.* The HOLY GHOST hath also furnish'd us with very proper Materials for the Prosecution of such an Inquiry, and that in such a Manner, that none might by any Pretence evade their Duty. Sometimes you have this Subject treated on in a Philosophical Way, as *Eccles.* xii. and sometimes Metaphorically, as *Job* xiv. and many other Places, that so neither the Scholar nor the Mechanick, should want Matter for the imploying their Thoughts on this solemn Affair. And that such an Inquiry may be made in a serious and concern'd Manner, the HOLY GHOST hath also acquainted us with the Condition of Men after Death, both of the Righteous and of the Wicked: Of the former, that he was receiv'd into *Abraham's Bosom*; and of the latter, that in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torment, *Luke* xvi. Even in this mysterious Book of the *Revelations*, the same Chapter ver. 11. concerning the miserable State of the Wicked, 'tis said, *The Smoak of their Torment ascends up for ever, and ever; and they have no rest Day nor Night.* And then, as to the future State of the Righteous, 'tis said in the Words of the Text, they are *Blessed*, with the Reasons of this Blessedness. IN



IN speaking to these Words, I shall observe,

I. THAT the State and Condition of all Pious Persons, after Death, is, Blessed, *Blessed are they that die in the LORD.*

II. I shall observe wherein this Blessedness consists, *That they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

III. THAT this is what GOD will have publish'd for the Advantage of the Living : Namely, That Pious Persons after Death are Blessed.

I. THAT Pious Persons after Death are Blessed, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD.* Here I shall rather consider myself as speaking to those who embrace the Truth of GOD, as discover'd in that Divine Revelation He hath given of Himself and his Works, of his Servants and of their Rewards; and therefore the Arguments I make use of, will be easy and plain; such as,

I. THIS is what the Scripture hath very plentifully reveal'd and given the most assur'd Confirmation of. Only here, before I proceed in the Argument, it will be necessary to consider, who those Pious Persons are that shall be Blessed after Death; and they are here said to be such as die in the LORD; *Blessed are the Dead, that die in the LORD.* Some understand this

this of the Cause for which they died. But this Interpretation seems too strait; others of the Manner of their Dying, they died in the Faith and Fear of GOD: And this seems more near, and more Catholick: They died in Union with CHRIST, and so consequently in a State of Reconciliation with GOD, they died in his Favour, and in his Fear; and what manner of Persons they now are, will appear, if you consult their Character, Rom. viii. 1. there you have an Account of Persons in Union with CHRIST, freed thereby from all Condemnation, they are such as *walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* What the Fruits of the Flesh and Spirit are you may see, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 19. *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness. 20. Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies. 21. Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such-like: of which I told you before, as I have also told you in Times past, that they which do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD.*

'Tis very plain, that Persons living and dying thus, do not *die in the LORD*; nor can I have any Notion about the sure and certain Hope of such unto the Resurrection of eternal Life.

Ver. 22. *BUT the Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith. 23. Meekness, Temperance:*  
against

against such there is no Law; nor no Person to hinder their Blessedness.

So that by Pious Persons, I understand such, as being in Union with CHRIST, do shew out of a good Conversation, their Works with Meekness and Wisdom, Jam. iii. 13. And to such the Promise of Blessedness is made, Psal. l. 23. *And to him that orders his Conversation aright, I will shew the Salvation of GOD.* Now of such the Scripture plentifully reveals the Happiness, and promises Blessedness unto after Death. *Lazarus* was an Instance of this, and so was *Moses* and *Elias*, those *Old Testament* Saints, when they appear'd with CHRIST upon the Mount of Transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 3. I might also enumerate in various Citations out of the *Old* and *New Testament*, wherein the Promises of future Blessedness are made to such Persons. Observe that Passage, Matth. xxv. ult. where the Great JUDGE and LORD of All is represented as sitting upon his Throne, and having all Nations gather'd together before him, and giving Sentence upon every Man according to his Works, *These*, says He, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal.*

2. THIS is what GOD encourages us to follow him in the Apprehensions of, though in other Things we may not be selfish, we are not allow'd to act from selfish Principles; yet in the great Affair of our Immortal Souls, He gives us leave to have Respect



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Respect unto the Recompence of Reward :  
 So you have it recorded concerning Mo-  
 ses, Heb. xi. 26. *He esteemed the Reproach of*  
**CHRIST** *greater Riches, than the Treasures of*  
*Egypt ; for he had Respect unto the Recompence*  
*of Reward.* Nay, we may go further, and  
 observe, That even **CHRIST** himself was in-  
 courag'd in his Work, which upon our ac-  
 count He was to do, from the very same Pro-  
 spect, Heb. xii. 3. *Who for the Joy that was set*  
*before him, endured the Cross, despised the Shame,*  
*and is now set down on the Right Hand of God,*  
 Thus you see the State of future Happiness,  
 was once an Incouragement to the Head, as  
 it hath often been to the Members ; thus also  
 are they call'd to the passive Work of Chri-  
 stians, and animated to ingage in it with a,  
*fear none of these Things, which thou shalt suffer :*  
*Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison,*  
*that ye may be tried, and ye shall have Tribulation*  
*Ten Days :* Be thou faithful unto Death, and  
*I will give thee a Crown of Life,* Rev. x. 16.  
 Where you may observe, That whatever it  
 was a Christian was call'd to suffer, yet  
 the Crown of Life was propos'd for an In-  
 couragement to him not to desert the good  
 Cause he was ingag'd in, upon the Account  
 of the passive Work, because the Reward  
 was beyond whatever could be the Cost in  
 the Service. You will find our SAVIOUR  
 when he was about to leave this World, and  
 to take Possession of the heavenly Glories,  
 that He might satisfy the languishing Minds  
 of



of his Disciples and Followers, He assures 'em of this beyond all Disappointments, *Joh. xiv. 2.* *In my Father's House are many Mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a Place for you.* q. d. If there was not a future Reward of Blessedness in another World and State, I would never have engag'd you in so much Opposition and Tribulation for my Sake and Interest. Here see indeed, as St. Paul observes, *1 Cor. xv. 19.* *If in this Life only we have Hope in CHRIST, we are of all Men the most miserable.*

3. THE Happiness of Pious Persons after Death is certain, from the Command here given to publish and declare it; 'twas a Voice from Heaven, that said, *Write, Blessed are the Dead, that die in the LORD.* GOD would not have order'd his Servant, nor commanded him to have written any Thing uncertain; if GOD bids his Servant write so, and so; who shall call that Writing into question. We may observe that Things of the greatest Moment have been in this Manner communicated to the World. Such was that Testimony given unto CHRIST himself, as GOD's beloved Son, *2 Pet. i. 17.* *For he received from GOD the Father, Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* We have therefore no more Reason to doubt what the Condition of Pious Persons will be after Death, than we have,

B

Whether

Whether or no CHRIST was GOD's beloved SON, in whom the Delight of the FATHER rested.

4. THE Happiness of Persons truly Religious, is certain after Death; because 'tis what is witness'd unto by the Infallible Spirit. *Yea, saith the Spirit.* GOD the Father commands it to be written, and GOD the HOLY GHOST testifies to the Truth of it; He whose Work, whose peculiar Office it is to prepare such Persons for this Blessedness, by working and accomplishing in them all those Qualifications, that might dispose and render them mete for that *Inheritance with the Saints in Light*; He that qualifies for this Blessedness, that seals them up unto it, who will also dwell with their Dust in order to the raising of that, and making that a Partner in the Blessedness, in that witnesses to the Certainty of this Happiness.

So that if we lay these Arguments together, we shall find what will amount to a sufficient Proof of the Point in Hand, *viz.* The Blessedness of Pious Persons after Death. 'Tis what the sacred Oracles make a convincing Discovery of; 'tis that whereby GOD encourages his People to follow him in the Expectation of; and is assur'd unto every Christian by CHRIST himself; 'tis what also the Infallible SPIRIT gives Witness unto.

I NOW proceed to the *Second* General Note.

## II. WHAT

II. WHAT this Blessedness is, or wherein it does consist. And here I must say at first, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* The Scripture gives us some shadowy Account of of this Blessedness, as much as we are capable receiving while we are on this side that State.

I. THEIR Souls are blessed, for they immediately pass into Glory; not into outward Courts, until the Resurrection, as some vainly imagine; nor into a Place of Purgation after Death, as others stupidly declare; but as once the Soul of the REDEEMER immediately went into the Paradise Above as our Fore-runner, when He told the Thief, *To Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* Hell had not used to be denominated after that way; not can we suppose it would have been any Advantage to the Thief to have gone there, though he had had the SAVIOUR with him. He frequently leads his People by the Gates of Hell to Heaven; but never thro' Hell itself; for whoever once enters there, there's immediately a great Gulf fix'd, so that there's no Possibility of their returning. *Lazarus* upon his Death was immediately comforted; and *Paul* made this the Argument of his desiring to depart, *that he may be with CHRIST, Phil. i. 23.* So *Solomon* informs us, That though the Dust returns to the



*the Dust again, the Spirit goes to GOD that gave it: That is redeem'd from the Power of the Grave, and can't see Corruption. Now none can once scruple the Happiness of that Soul that goes to be with CHRIST in Paradise, or lodg'd in Abraham's Bosom, to be in that Presence where there is Fulness of Joy, and that Right Hand where there are Pleasures for evermore.*

2. THE Bodies of the Saints are blessed after Death; *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD.* Not merely because the Soul is gone into the immediate Injoyment of GOD, amongst the separate *Spirits of Just Men made perfect* in an unknown World, of Light, and Life, and Love; but if you mind the Phrase, 'tis that which is dead, that claims the Blessing: 'Tis affix'd unto that Part, *Blessed are the Dead.* Now 'tis not the Soul but the Body that is dead; and even this dead Part is blessed, and this Blessing you will observe is secur'd unto this Part, by its Union with CHRIST. 'Tis hence that the Dead are Blessed, because they *die in the LORD*; their Dust being united unto CHRIST, while that Union remains (which is indeed indissolvable) that Part must be blessed: And hence as the Divine SPIRIT took up his abode in the Bodies of the Saints while they were living, as 'tis said, 1 Cor. vi. 19. *What, know you not that your Bodies are Temples of the HOLY GHOST, which is in you?* So he leaves not those Temples; no, not when the earthly House of this

this Tabernacle is dissolv'd, when these dead Bodies are laid in the Grave; accordingly 'tis spoken for the Comfort of living Saints, concerning their dead Bodies, *Rom. viii. 11.* *If the Spirit of him that raised up JESUS from the Dead, dwell in you; He that raised up CHRIST from the Dead, shall also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* This Spirit does not forsake their very Dust; but will one Day be a Principle of Power to quicken and raise it: And hence we can best account for Death, as not being a Curse to the Pious Person, because it separates no Part of him from the LORD; but when that Spirit that dwells in the Body shall raise and quicken that, and *make it like unto CHRIST'S Glorious Body*, as 'tis express'd, *Phil. iii. 21.* in order to its joyful meeting its former dear Companion, that as once they in the most intimate manner partook of the Grievs and Joys of each other in a very sympathizing way, so now they may again be one in the Enjoyment of that eternal Felicity they are arriv'd unto.

BUT I shall more particularly inquire into the Happiness of Pious Persons after Death, as we find it express'd in the *Text*.

I. THEY shall rest from their Labours. The same Word *καταπαύω*, which is here render'd *Labour*, is sometimes used for expressing of those Places in the *Old Testament*, where the Original signifies a Conjunction of Labour, Sorrow, Heaviness and Pain, as

*Job*

*Job* v. 7. Ἄλλὰ θύρωται γενῶναι νότον; so *Psal.* viii. 9, 10. and cvi. 12. 'tis used to express the variety of Tribulation, Calamity and Crosses, under which the Saints in this Life do continually groan, *1 Cor.* iv. 12, &c. 'tis sometimes used for the over-spending of the vital Parts by reason of so much Sorrow, Labour and Toil, that without present Succour and Comfort, nothing but Death is to be expected. *Vox Græca respondet Hebraica, ὅτι significanti laborem cum sensu Molestie conjunctum. Piscat. in Schol. vid. Leigh's Critica Sacra in Verb. not.* But here I shall note more particularly what is compriz'd in this Part of the Blessedness of Pious Persons after Death.

I. THEY shall be freed from Sin: This will be a noble Part of the Saints Happiness Above, That whereas all their Days they have been Watching, Fasting, Praying, Striving against it; and sometimes, notwithstanding all their Labour, were overcome by it, even in their best Opposition, and were compell'd to do the Things which they allow'd not; which was their great Grief, and had nothing to say, but with *St. Paul*, 'Tis no more I, but Sin that dwelleth in me, *Rom.* vii. 17. At other Times they got some little Advantage, and were enabled through the Spirit, to mortify the Deeds of the Body, and to rejoyce in the Promise, That Sin should not have Dominion over them, *Rom.* vi. 14. but then they could not sit down easy nor rest long together,



gether, because this Enemy had an Inhabitation, and the frozen Snake would hiss again.

If you ask the Christian now, What is his greatest Labour? he tells you, Sin. “ Oh, “ says the Pious Soul, Sin is such a Burden “ to me, so ready to prevail over me, and I “ am so ready to be bow’d down with it, “ that it constitutes my Life a Life of Labour, with how much Ease might I pass “ through this present Life and State; and “ with what Incouragement might I ingage “ against all my Spiritual Enemies, and triumph over them, but were it not for Sin “ that dwelleth in me, and upon every Occasion is so ready to betray me.” But as the Apostle observes, *Rom. vi. 7. He that is dead, is freed from Sin.* He that is dead unto it now, is freed from Delight and Pleasure in it; but he that is dead indeed, the Saint that dies in the LORD, he is freed from the very Inhabitation; the Being of it as well as its Power or Delight in Sin: And this has been a comfortable Consideration to some Christians, That when they rose again, they should leave Sin in the Grave; happy indeed must such Persons be that have Death to be the Sepulchre of their Sin, but not of their good Works, for they shall follow them.

2. THEY shall be freed from all Temptations to Sin, or that are occasion’d by it. What is a Christians Labour here? Why, ’tis

'tis a continual Conflict between the Flesh and the Spirit, there's so many Temptations attend the present State, as keeps the Christian constantly at Work, and makes his Life a Life of Labour; how often may we now under the Prevalency of Temptation, and the fierce Assaults of Satan, and his spiritual Enemies, hear the Christian crying out, and bewailing his own Weakness, while *without are Fightings, and within are Fears*;

" I shall never (says he) hold out unto the  
 " End: I have indeed begun in the Spirit,  
 " but I shall end in the Flesh! I once thought  
 " there was something spiritual and divine,  
 " that an internal, powerful, effectual Change  
 " was wrought, and that the Divine Image  
 " was re-instamp'd; but now I am afraid,  
 " if there be any such Thing or no!  
 " Once I thought (adds the Christian) I had  
 " a divine Sensation, a pleasurable Injoyment,  
 " and sensible Feeling of the Powers of the  
 " World to come; but alas! all is vanish'd  
 " as a Dream when a Man awakes; those  
 " Images that were presented to his Fancy,  
 " as soon as Reason ascends the Throne, are  
 " at once withdrawn. So now I am afraid  
 " upon cooler Thoughts, and a more strict  
 " Search, all was but a Flash, an Appearance that discover'd itself but a little while,  
 " and is gone again, and appears no more.  
 " Oh, that I knew my Heart was right with  
 " God, and that eternal Life was indeed begun in my Soul; then I could sing at my  
 " Work,

“ Work, and rejoyce in my Privileges. If  
 “ I did but know my Interest in the Divine  
 “ Favour, and that I was compassed about  
 “ with that Loving-kindness, I would not  
 “ be afraid of any Thing I meet with here;  
 “ no, not of Death itself; but would willing-  
 “ ly embrace that King of Terrors, with the  
 “ greatest Presence of Mind, and Nobility of  
 “ Spirit.” But this is a Labour the Pious  
 Person shall after Death rest from; all these  
 Temptations, Doubts and Scruples that at-  
 tend the present State, shall be remov’d;  
 though now ’tis no small Part of the Chri-  
 stian’s Labour, yet then they shall rest from  
 it.

3. THEY shall then rest from all the un-  
 happy Consequences of it: Such are all those  
 bodily Infirmities and Afflictions that attend  
 the present Life, together with Sorrows of  
 Mind, and Anguish of Spirit, occasion’d by  
 the hiding of God’s Face, or the withdrawing  
 of that special Presence, they have sometimes  
 enjoy’d. The Life of some Christians is con-  
 stituted a Life of Labour, if we consider at  
 What Pains, and with what Difficulty they  
 get the Bread of their Souls, either by having  
 their Lot cast in the Idolatrous, Antichristian  
 Part of the World; or if not so, yet by be-  
 ing so far remote from that Worship which  
 they find to promote their spiritual Life; and  
 if not incommoded by the Distance of Way,  
 yet those bodily Weaknesses and Infirmities  
 attend them, that through the necessary  
 C Struggle



Struggle occasion'd from hence, their Life becomes laborious. Nor can I persuade myself, but that there was more intended in that part of the Curse, *In the Sweat of thy Brows shalt thou eat thy Bread*, than just what relates to our temporal Provision as Creatures, and a Part of God's lower Creation: there was undoubtedly a Reference had in this to our Lives as Christians, to teach us, that the spiritual Life must be maintain'd in a Way of Labour; and hence we have that Exhortation of *striving to enter in at the strait Gate*, Luke xiii. 24. And agreeable hereunto, we are told, *That the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force*, Mat. xi. 12. And then, the Sorrow of the Mind, and Anguish of Spirit from the hidings of God's Face, or the Withdrawings of that special Presence they have enjoy'd; this burdens their Minds, and damps their Joys. Now, with the Spouse, *Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3.* they can take no Rest by Night nor Day, because the Comforter, who should relieve their Souls, is far from them. Now they are under the discouraging Apprehensions (perhaps) of an eternal Desertion; or if not, yet their Lives are made bitter from a Consideration of what they formerly enjoy'd, but have now lost: Now you will hear the Christian thus bemoaning himself: " Oh, that it were with  
 " me as in Time past, in the Days when God  
 " appear'd in the Tokens of his Love, ar-  
 " ray'd with all the Ensigns of Grace and  
 " Mercy,

“ Mercy, when to the Ravishment of my  
 “ Mind, and the Tranquillity of my Spirit,  
 “ He condescended to let me know, That if  
 “ *the earthly House of this Tabernacle were dis-*  
 “ *solv’d, I had a building of GOD, an House*  
 “ *not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens!*  
 “ But careless Wretch! I soon turn’d aside,  
 “ and brought a Storm upon all this Sun-  
 “ shine, a Cloud upon all the Glory; and  
 “ now I am left to mourn over the Conse-  
 “ quences of that Evil, that even in the Com-  
 “ mission had no Sweetness in it. Thus,  
 “ (saith the Christian) either from the Place  
 “ where my Lot is cast in the World, from  
 “ the Distance of Way, Infirmities of Body,  
 “ or Trouble of Mind, some of these Con-  
 “ sequents of Sin do constitute my Life a  
 “ Life of Labour.” But this also is what  
*they that die in the LORD*, shall be freed from;  
 for as there shall not be one Relick of Sin  
 remaining, so consequently, not any Tempta-  
 tions to it or occasion’d by it, so neither shall  
 there be any unhappy Consequents of it.

THE Second Part of the Saints Happiness,  
 as here laid down, is, *Their Works do follow*  
*them*, ἀκολουθεῖ μετὰ αὐτῶν, do follow, or go  
 with them, *ut fructus*, not *antecedunt ut Causa*,  
 they follow them as Rewards; not go before  
 as Causes: ἀκολουθεῖ enim non tam affectum, aut  
*pedissequum*, quam itineris socium comitem-  
 que significat, teste Platone in Cratylo. So that  
 although when we have done all, we  
 are unprofitable; and by our Works we

merit nothing; yet when Death comes, they shall neither be lost nor left behind; they shall go along with the Saints, they shall accompany all Pious Persons, when they leave this World:

1. To testify unto the Justice of God, in that Reward of Grace He will then bestow upon them.

'Tis by our Works that our Faith is made perfect, as the Apostle James observes, Chap. ii. verse 22. *Seest thou then how Faith wrought with his Works? And by Works was his Faith made perfect.* God will in a Way of Justice, as well as Grace, render to the Saints according to their Works; He that is the Judge of all the Earth, will certainly do right. And though in the State of Blessedness Above, all those happy Souls shall enjoy as much as will render their State compleat; yet possibly there may be Degrees in Glory hereafter, as well as in Grace here. No doubt there will be some peculiar Regard had unto those who labour'd much here: For though *they that be Wise, shall shine as the Firmament*; yet *they that turn many to Righteousness, shall be as the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. There seem'd to be a particular Notice taken of those Christians that came out of great Tribulation, that labour'd and suffer'd much, Rev. vii. 13, 14. One of the eminent and glorious Inhabitants of the upper World, proposes the Question, *What are those that are arrayed in White Robes, and whence*



whence come they? And then answers himself, as being best able, *These are they which came out of great Tribulation.* Heaven, I believe, will be more welcome, and more glorious, to the laborious Christian, that through great Tribulation arriv'd there, who fought his Way through the sharpest Encounters, and engaged against the strongest Opposition; *their Works shall follow them*; Not to justify them; the Righteousness of CHRIST will be sufficient for that; but to testify unto the Integrity of their Lives, and the Sincerity of their Actions, while they were in the lower World, to justify the Justice and Equity of GOD in bestowing the Reward of grace upon them. Or,

2. *THEIR Works do follow them*; that is, the Wages or Reward of their Works; so you find, 2 Cor. v. 10. where, by *the Things done in the Body*, we understand the Reward of those Things metonymically, the Word there used, *νομιζεται*, is again used, 1 Pet. i. 9. to signify our receiving the Recompence of Reward, express'd by *receiving the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls*. If we take the Phrase in this Sense, which the Words very well bear; then by their Works following them, we shall Note, the eternal Reward of their Works, which is given of Grace, which will consist in the Perfection of the Happiness of that unalterable State, when they shall be added unto the Number of *the Spirits of just Men made perfect*.

1. As all Sin, all Temptation to, and every unhappy Consequent of Sin, shall be done away; so now every Grace shall also be compleated, to their everlasting Consolation, beyond whatever they had a Notion of in this Life, yea, even when they were attended with the most fervent and holy Elevations of Mind in any Act of Worship here; for as Grace implanted in the Soul by the Operations of the Divine Spirit, is Glory begun; so is Glory in the other World Grace perfected: The Saint now at Times, is so under the Influences of Grace, as to say, "I believe, I know I believe, and I know the  
 " G O D I believe in; I love the REDEEM-  
 " ER, I do it with all my Soul, with all my  
 " Strength; I see so much of his Glory as  
 " of the Onely-begotten of the FATHER,  
 " appearing in the mild and kind Methods  
 " of his Grace and Truth, as hath indeed  
 " attracted all my inward Powers, and fix'd  
 " my warm Affections upon Him; so that  
 " I can, from the most deliberate Experience  
 " of my own Mind, say, *Whom have I in*  
 " *Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth*  
 " *I desire besides Thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 25. My  
 " Hope in Him, and my Expectations from  
 " him, are such as I value above Thousands  
 " of Gold and Silver; nor are to be compared with any of the Honours or Preferments of the present State." But alas! What will this be to the Saints Injoyment Above, when the Pious One arrives to that  
 Haven

Haven of Rest he so much desires, when his Faith shall be turn'd into the most delightful, and Soul-transporting Vision, his Hope into Fruition, where he shall love in such a rapturous, ravishing manner as shall still leave a fresh Gust upon the Appetite, and yet afford the most ineffable, eternal Consolation, when their Patience, their Joy, their Hope, their Love, and every Thing else, they now in their best Frames partake of, shall be had in the most surprizing, entertaining manner, by an Addition of the same, by a Change infinitely to their Advantage; thus *their Works follow them.*

2. THEY shall now perfectly and fully enjoy that SAVIOUR, whom they only saw through the Lattices here. Now their Piety was encourag'd, and their private and publick Devotions express'd, with a *We would see JESUS.* But in the World above, they shall see as they are seen, and know as they are known. What the Communications of Glory will be, or in what manner, is not easy now to determine; undoubtedly they will be such as will render that State universally compleat and happy. Some are of the Opinion, That in that invisible World, as in ours, all those Emanations of Light, Life and Love, will be made to us in and through CHRIST JESUS, though in an infinitely transcending Manner. From whom at present I see no Reason to dissent; the having a GOD there in our Nature, must needs



needs bespeak the Perfection of that State; for if that better Thing which G O D hath provided for us, without which they under the former Dispensation were not made perfect; be (according to the general Sense of the Fathers) to be referr'd to the Happiness of a future State, then I can't see what we have in Heaven now, which they had not, unless a G O D in our Nature; for certainly the Entrance of CHRIST into Heaven upon his finishing the Work of Redemption, was a very great Instance of created Glory: But, as I said before, let these Communications be what they will, or in what Way, they are such as will render that State intirely happy; and that is Motive sufficient to us to labour after an Interest in it: the Communion and full Injoyment of the SAVIOUR in our Nature, will be to the everlasting Consolation of those that die in Union with him. This is what makes the Christian desire Dissolution, 'Tis that he may be with CHRIST, or, as St. Paul in another Place expresses it, *2 Cor. v. 8. We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the LORD.* 'Tis now the Christian's Grief, that he is no more with CHRIST; and when he does enjoy some happy Degree of Nearness unto him, it creates a Heaven in his Mind, and leaves the greatest Tranquillity upon his Spirit; when mounted a little upon the Wings of Faith, he gets to the Top of *Pisgah*, and from thence takes a View of the Promised

mised Land, and sees *Emanuel* there; it mortifies him to all the Glory of this lower World, so that he can't now give himself a Loose to the Follies of Mankind; nor can he set his Mind upon that which is not; But as one that is pleas'd with the Prospect of the *New Jerusalem*, and the Thoughts of enjoying his SAVIOUR, there; all his Thoughts, Words and Actions, are in some good Degree Calculated to serve this very End and Purpose. He can't indulge those wanton Airs, nor be ravish'd with the painted Glories of the present State; he hath greater Views and Prospects, even the enjoying the SAVIOUR Above in the most intimate Manner; and therefore all his Designs do center in the obtaining this Happiness. Nay, suppose the Christian now to have a more obscure Sight of this SAVIOUR through the Lattices, if he does not with *Simeon* imbrace him in his Arms, and so immediately say, Let me be gone where I may be for ever with him; but so as to see him in his Ordinances, and behold his Power and Glory in these lower Courts; yet even this will have such an Effect upon the Christian, as that he will say, " O how I  
 " love the Habitation of Thy House, because  
 " it is the Place where Thine Honour dwells;  
 " my Soul longeth, my Flesh thirsteth with  
 " a Desire of drawing nigh unto God in his  
 " House, because 'tis the Gate of Heaven."  
 The Saints now think themselves well rewarded, if (through the greatest Difficulties

of Way, Weather, bodily Infirmities, or inward Sorrows) attending upon the Ordinances, they meet the SAVIOUR there; all their tedious Searches are forgotten, 'tis but a little, when they find Him whom their Soul loves. If then the near, or distant Views of a REDEEMER here, be so very entertaining, we may well say, Blessed are such, the Reward of whose Labours is no less than an eternal, uninterrupted Injoyment of, and Communion with this SAVIOUR.

3. As the Service of the Pious Person here was attended with Toil and Labour, so his Reward shall be with Rest and Pleasure; he labour'd here, and he shall not be idle there; but then his Employ shall be so adapted to his State, and even to his Desire, that he shall not less love the Service, than enjoy the Happiness; because though now the Spirit was sometimes willing, when the Flesh was weak; yet then there shall be nothing to hinder, but every thing to help, in the Management of this glorious Employ: Now is there no Work more pleasant, when a Sense of divine Love raises our Spirits, and engages our inward Powers; but commonly none worse perform'd than that which we hope to be employ'd in to all Eternity: It was a delightful Prospect that *John* had when he peep'd into Heaven, and saw all their Worship and all their Order, how Saints and Seraphs joyn'd together to compose an August Assembly in the carrying on of the most agreeable



agreeable Worship, paid to the most deserving Object, *Rev. v. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.* And this is spoken of as the Reward of the laborious Christian, such as come out of great Tribulation, *Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.* They are before the Throne of GOD, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne, he feeds them, and leads them to living Fountains of Waters. Which bespeaks the Perpetuity of their Consolation: For though a Fountain, or Spring of living Waters may decay, yet a living Fountain never can: Thus shall they fall down and admire the Love that at first pitch'd upon them, the Riches of that Redeeming Blood that purchased them, and the Freeness of that effectual, distinguishing Grace, that call'd them; the Kindness of that SAVIOUR that fed them, and fed them while in the Wilderness; and the Condescension of that Spirit that dwells with their Dust in the Grave, and will at last raise it, that it may be fashion'd like unto CHRIST's Glorious Body. Blessed then, may we conclude, are those that die in Union with CHRIST; who as a Reward of their Labours, shall have their Grace perfected, their Communion with CHRIST compleated: They shall rest; yet so as to be imploy'd in that Service which will be to their eternal Satisfaction.

THE Third general Note.

III. THAT the Happiness of those that *die in the LORD*, in Union with CHRIST, is what GOD will have communicated for the Benefit of the Living. And therefore John was order'd to write it: *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD, from henceforth.* The *Ἀνάγι*, here, may not unfitly be read, *ἀνάγι*, and render'd by *plane*, *omnino*, and then the Sense runs smoothly thus; *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Truly the Dead are blessed that die in the LORD.* But what I shall note, will be, That GOD will have the Blessedness of Pious Persons after Death, to be made known for the Benefit of the Living.

WRITE it,

I. THAT others may imitate their Virtues, and labour after such Attainments, in order to their arriving to the same Happiness. It is an Apostolick Exhortation, *That ye be not slothful; but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience, inherit the Promises,* Heb. vi. 12. There's none so abandon'd to Luxury, and given over to Sensuality, but sooner or later, have a Desire, with *Balaam*, to *die the Death of the Righteous*, and to *have their last End like his.*

BUT this alone will not do: Those that rest from their Labours, and have their Works follow them, are only such as *die in the*

the LORD. And hence, whatever Shew of Religion, though never so specious, fair and plausible, without this vital Union (which is the Spring from whence all spiritual Life and Grace flows, which is the Foundation of all their Obedience) it will not intitle a Man to the Happiness of the Upper World, nor can he put in any tolerable Claim to the Blessings of a future State.

2. WRITE, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the LORD.* Publish it, that so the World may know of what Account God's Servants are to him, and how faithfully and plentifully He rewards them: His Servants are of such Account with him, that *their Death is precious in his Sight*; as that proud Monarch once said, *Isa. x. 8. Are not my Princes altogether Kings?* So all the Servants of this Sovereign Monarch are Kings; and of such Account, as that he will judge the Wicked, even for those *hard Speeches they have used against them*; for whatever is said or done against them, He takes as done against himself; He takes continual Care of them, Watches over them Night and Day, lest any hurt them. As our LORD would have this to be written, so once He told the World himself, That if *any Man offended one of these little Ones that believed in him, better for that Man that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and he were cast into the Depth of the Sea, Matth. xviii. 6.* Such is the Account their LORD makes of them. And then, as to the Reward, when they can't



can't work, He gives them Wages; and when they are dead, He will have the World to know, that their Dust is in Covenant with him, and their dead Bodies are blessed with the Presence of that SPIRIT, which will raise and quicken them at the last Day.

G O D's rewarding his Servants, was never intended to be kept as a Secret from the World; He never spoke in secret, in a dark Place of the Earth, *Seek ye me (serve ye me) in vain.* No; He always declar'd the contrary, in the most publick manner; they have such a Reward now (*for in keeping God's Commands, there not only shall be, but is great Reward*) they would not easily part with: The Promise relating to this Life, the present Testimonies of Love, and Pledges of Favour, are upon just Reasons valu'd by them: But what is all they have now in Hand, to what they have in Hope! Though they are well rewarded now, and the present Earnest is beyond the present Labour; yet G O D will not forget them when they have left this World: Nay, then they shall have the great Reward, which will infinitely surpass whatever they had here, more than *Canaan* itself, in the full Possession, did those few Grapes, Figs and Pomgranates, the Spies brought out of it. That Reward will be no less than a Kingdom and a Crown. Every the meanest Believer shall have that; he that labour'd least, and was but a While in the Vineyard,

yard, shall have his Penny. *This Honour have all his Saints.*

3. WRITE, that it may stand upon Record, for the Comfort of those that are now labouring, let the Servants know that they shall rest; tell them, As those, who once were Labourers, do now rest; so they who now are Labourers, shall rest; for there remains a Rest unto those that are now here, as well as they enjoy one that are gone to it; and those that are gone before do not more really enjoy it, than those that are treading in the same Steps shall do. How often may we hear the labouring Christian Comforting himself with the Expectation of Rest? you will observe him labouring under bodily Infirmities, or inward Sorrows, wading through a Sea of Trouble and Difficulties while he is ingag'd in the spiritual Conflict. " Now, " says he, I am upon the Sea, the Floods " come into my Soul, I sink in the deep " Waters, I am dash'd with the roaring " Billows: Sometimes I am thrown upon " the Rock of Presumption, and at other " Times I am cast upon the Sands of De- " spair; I find the Vessel leaking that the " immortal Treasure is imbark'd in; and " at Times, though I Pump as for Life, " I am in Danger of Drowning: But here's " my Comfort, That though I am now " upon the Sea, yet there is a Haven of " Rest; there is a desir'd Port, that I am " Sailing

" Sailing towards, where this Vessel will  
 " be re-fitted, and stand as an eternal Mo-  
 " nument of the Wisdom, Love, and Pow-  
 " er of that Pilot who brought it at last  
 " safe there, albeit I can't now descry it,  
 " nor how to advance to it.

" I AM now, says the Christian, engag'd  
 " in a Warfare, my Enemies are too Po-  
 " tent ; so that I am often wounded, and  
 " too often led away Captive, and notwith-  
 " standing all my Fighting and Striving,  
 " I am overcome : I have indeed a Pow-  
 " erful Captain that hath overcome, who  
 " bids me lay hold of his Strength ; and  
 " when I can, then I overcome ; and He  
 " will make me more than a Conqueror :  
 " I am surrounded with Trouble and La-  
 " bour, and have very little of that which  
 " Men call Happiness ; but when Death  
 " comes, I shall be blessed ; for I shall rest  
 " from my Labours, and my Works will  
 " follow ; they will accompany me to that  
 " Land of Rest." The Hireling does not  
 more encourage himself in his Work, with  
 the Expectation of Reward, than the la-  
 bouring Saint does with the Views of that  
 Rest which remains for him. This animates  
 his Mind with a fresh Vigor ; " Come,  
 " says he, I'll make one Push more, I'll ex-  
 " ert all my Strength, I'll marshal all my  
 " Forces, and Rally once more. What  
 " if I am now weak, and I have often  
 " been foil'd by a powerful Enemy ; yet  
 " I



“ I will do all that I can, I will endeavour  
 “ to hold out; I am contented to labour  
 “ now, because the Time is advancing when  
 “ I shall rest.” Communicate the Know-  
 ledge of the Blessedness of Pious Persons af-  
 ter Death, for the Benefit of the Living,  
 that they may imitate their Vertues, and en-  
 deavour after such Attainments, in order to  
 their arriving to the same Happiness: Let  
 it be written, that the World may know of  
 what Account Pious Ones are unto GOD,  
 and how well He rewards them both in the  
 present and future State: Let it be record-  
 ed, that so those that now labour, may be  
 encourag’d with the Views of Rest.

I SHALL now only make some few Refle-  
 ctions upon the whole.

I. THAT the Blessedness of Pious Per-  
 sons after Death, is secur’d by their Union  
 with CHRIST: ’Tis in this Way that the  
 Bodies of the Saints become such a sacred  
*Depositum* when they are laid in the Dust;  
 for though ’tis said, *Blessed are the Dead*;  
 yet you find that Blessedness under a sub-  
 jective Restriction or Limitation, to such as  
*die in the LORD*: ’Tis not unto Death  
 that the Blessedness pertains; ’tis Union  
 with CHRIST, that secures the Christian’s  
 Blessedness. Death is only the Inlet to the  
 full Injoyment of it; He can easily keep  
 what he charges himself with, and raise up  
 E those

those Bodies by his Spirit that dwells in them. The Apostle *Paul*, when he is cautioning the believing *Corinthians* against Fornication, and such Sins as were done against the Body, inforces it from the Consideration of that Union there was between CHRIST and their Bodies, 1 Cor. vi. 15. *Know ye not that your Bodies are Members of CHRIST?* Hence 'tis that they are blessed, because this is the Foundation of all that Communion they now do, or ever shall enjoy with CHRIST their Head: For as the first *Adam* could do us no Hurt, were we not descended out of his Loins, as our Common Head; so the second *Adam* does us no Good, but as we are united to him; I mean, with Respect to eternal Salvation. For the very Choosing of Sinners unto himself was in this Way, 'twas in CHRIST JESUS, *Eph. i. 4.* In CHRIST JESUS, and so freed from Condemnation, *Rom. viii. 1.* Seeing therefore the Blessedness of Pious Persons after Death, is secur'd by their Union with CHRIST, how much should it be their Concern while living, yea, the Concern of us all, with the holy Apostle, *Phil. iii. 9.* at last to *be found in Him*, in Union with him, when Death comes; for surely without this, all our Religion will appear to be vain: This should also now take us off the vain Opinion of faring the better for our Natural or Spiritual Privileges, while we are Strangers to this Union: 'tis not a saying,  
We

*we have Abraham to our Father*, nor a crying up, *The Temple of the LORD*; 'tis not the Ark alone that will save *Israel*; and 'tis no impossible Thing for GOD and the Ark to be separated. It should also instruct us how to carry it towards those that differ from us, because possibly they may be in Union with CHRIST, and have as good a Title to Blessedness, and as well secur'd as we. It should be the Resolution of each Pious Person, I will be united in my Affections, and in my Carriage towards all such as are united to CHRIST; though while we are in this imperfect State, where we none of us see but in Part, there may be some Distance in Matters of Judgment.

THIS is the first Remark, That the Blessedness of Pious Persons after Death, is secur'd by their Union with CHRIST; with some Practical Conclusions from such a Consideration.

2. THAT 'tis very unreasonable for the Saints under afflictive Providences here, to affix the Title of Unhappiness or Misery unto themselves, when their very Dust shall be blessed. We are too apt to say, *We have cleansed our Hearts in vain, and washed our Hands in Innocency*. What! Murmur or repine at any Thing here! when even your Dust is taken such Care of, when even that shall be blessed. And how should this in an especial Manner stifle all the Ebullitions



of Corruption discover'd in a Distrust of our daily Bread, a Fear of being reduc'd to such Circumstances as would be attended with Wants, and many Temptations arising from thence? Does God, will He pronounce these dead Bodies blessed, and will He take no Care of them living? Shall they then be kept as a sacred *Depositum* unto the Time of their Renovation, when being decently, and gloriously prepar'd, and commodiously fitted, the Soul shall return into her former Mansion? Shall all this be done for the Body when dead, and yet can we indulge a Distrust of the Divine Care while we are living! It may well be apply'd to such, *O ye of little Faith!* How little Reason also hath the Christian to be afraid of Death, when it can deprive no Part of him of the Blessing; no, not the Body, though it kills it, it can't Curse it; though it sends it to the Grave, it can't remove or lodge it any where from under the Divine Care; 'tis no matter whether we die in our Beds, or in Battel by Sea, or by Land; whether our Grave be a Fish's Belly, or the Bowels of the Earth, the Blessing belongs to the Body, and not the Place where 'tis laid: And therefore their Folly deserves exposing, that are more concern'd where, than how, they shall die, about this or that Place, than dying in the LORD.

3. As we value Rest and Peace for ever hereafter, we should be industrious and laborious

borious here. Those that die in the LORD,  
 are an industrious People, otherwise the Pro-  
 mise of resting from their Labour, would  
 not belong to them. And though I would  
 not insinuate, as if Heaven and Glory were  
 merited by our Labours, nor would I set  
 you to work on those Principles; yet this  
 is certain, That GOD will be inquir'd of  
 by us, and that He saves none but in a  
 Way of Duty: 'tis *the diligent Soul that shall  
 be made fat*; and in the Verse before the  
*Text* you have an Account what they were  
 that died in the LORD, *Here is the Patience  
 of the Saints, here are they that keep the Com-  
 mandments of GOD, and the Faith of JESUS  
 CHRIST.* The State we are now in, is a  
 Militant State, and our Course as Christi-  
 ans through this World, is every-where set  
 down in such a Manner, as makes this Life  
 to be a Life of Labour. Sometimes 'tis set  
 out by Wrestling, in which a Man exerts  
 himself both as to Strength and Skill to the ut-  
 most so; *Eph. vi. 12.* Sometimes by Running,  
 than which what can be more spending and  
 laborious? so *Heb. xii. 2.* Sometimes by  
 Striving to enter in at a strait Gate or  
 narrow Passage; and sometimes, yea, fre-  
 quently, by Fighting; All which do evi-  
 dently prove, how much Care we should  
 take, what Industry and Diligence we should  
 use in order to our safe Arrival at last un-  
 to that happy Number, who now do rest  
 from their Labours, and their Works follow  
 them.

them. As to the Person deceas'd, I believe she was upright and sincere, according to the Knowledge GOD had given her about the best Things; One who was still and quiet, and perhaps experienc'd more than ever she declar'd to the World. It was her Desire these Words might be insisted on for the Benefit of the Living. And we may say, We have Reason to believe, she is now amongst the Blessed Number of those that died in the LORD, who rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them,

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